DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 341 532 RC 018 546

TITLE Middle Schools and High Schools. INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions. National Indian Education Association (NIEA) Annual Conference (22nd, San Diego, California, October 16, 1990). 16, 1990).

INSTITUTION Department of Education, Washington, DC. Indian Nations At Risk Task Force.; National Advisory Council on Indian Education, Washington, D.C.

PUB DATE 16 Oct 90

NOTE 18p.; In: The Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education Joint Issues Sessions Proceedings. See RC 018 538.

PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indians; Boarding Schools; Community Programs; Cultural Education; *Dropout Prevention; Dropouts; Hearings; *High Schools; Intermediate Grades; *Middle Schools; Primary Sources; *Public Schools; Secondary Education; State Programs

IDENTIFIERS *Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools; Tribally Controlled Schools

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes two joint sessions held by the Indian Nations At Risk Task Force and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education to hear testimony on issues in Native American education at the middle school and high school levels. Issues and problems are: (1) factors contributing to high Native dropout rates, including teenage pregnancy, the stressful transition from tribal elementary school to public secondary school, substance abuse, and long commuting distances to school; (2) lack of Native parent and community involvement and empowerment in public schools; (3) lack of culturally relevant curriculum in public schools; (4) the shortage of certified Native teachers and difficulties in retaining teachers in tribal and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools due to low pay and lack of retirement programs; (5) inadequate funding and substandard facilities at BIA schools; (6) advantages and disadvantages of BIA boarding schools compared to public schools; (7) postsecondary planning, career aspirations, and college preparation versus vocational education; (8) difficulties in sharing innovative curriculum; and (9) the need for educational change in the schools serving Native Americans. Also described are local programs and strategies to curb high dropout rates; state and local initiatives encouraging inclusion of Native language and culture in the curriculum; and entrepreneurship programs in reservation schools. (SV)

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INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions
NIEA 22nd Annual Conference - San Diego, California
October 16, 1990

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"Middle Schools and High Schools"

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INAR/NACIE Joint Issues Sessions
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Summary: "Middle Schools and High Schools"

The first session on Middle Schools and High Schools was hosted by INAR Task Force member Byron Fullerton, the second session on these issues was co-hosted by INAR Task Force member Joseph Ely and NACIE Council member James Shore. The following issues, recommendations, and exemplary strategies were discussed:

I. Overview of the Issues

- It is really discouraging for me to hear you asking us to identify successful programs we know about. I am familiar with two public high schools, a junior high, and an elementary school, and so far there seems to be nothing successful in their programs. We have a high dropout rate and many social problems you've already heard about, such as lack of parental involvement, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and an increase in devil worship. Some of these problems are the same for every reservation. We have a lot more problems than we can handle.

  We need more input and we need more role models. But if we are going to send our people to school to become teachers or professionals, we need money, because a lot of our Indians are poor. We are trying. Our school district recently hired a parent coordinator to improve parent involvement because we believe that many of these problems could be alleviated if parents were more involved. But in the past, because parents were uneducated, they felt that the responsibilities were with the schools. Now we are trying to emphasize the partnership idea.

  The Task Force should be looking at all of these things. But I would also like to know what we can do at the grassroots level to help our kids. We have some ideas, but it seems like these reports come out year after year and they don't cure things.

- Some of the dropout problems we have are due to the lack of properly functioning support mechanisms. There are Title IV and Title V monies out there that should be providing this support. However, I believe that districts are abusing some of these funds. School districts need to be held accountable and asked to confirm that these monies are being spent to support the programs for which they were designated.

  I have a strong feeling that district people believe Native Americans aren't knowledgeable enough to play on this playing field. District administrators seem to believe they can satisfy the requirements and guidelines on paper much more quickly without involving tribal people.

  I also feel that people often provide "evidence" of their program's success that I would regard as "flim flam." For instance, even at this conference people try to promote their program's success with blatantly questionable evidence like a rap tape I heard yesterday. They said it was Indian folks, but for all I know it could have been M.C. Hammer. No effort was made to present any serious information or data that would confirm the program's impact on students.

II. **The High Rate of Dropouts**

Reasons for Dropping Out

- In trying to determine why students drop out, we haven't conducted a specific study, but we do go back to the homes of those students who have dropped out and ask them why they have left school and what we can do to try to get them back into the system. One thing we have found is that they get their money allotment when they are 18 years old. Many take that money and go out and buy a four-wheel-drive vehicle and squander the rest. Often they wreck the vehicle. This is a big deterrent to school completion. In a school of 90 students, we probably lose 7 or 8 kids a year because they turn 18 and get their money.

  Another big cause of dropping out is teenage pregnancy; a third is drug and alcohol use or abuse. Kids get caught in a partying cycle and the parents won't allow us to refer them to Indian Health Services or other counseling assistance or treatment. Some students transfer frequently between schools which tends to slow them down, but this is not as significant a problem as those related to 18th birthdays, teen pregnancy, and drugs and alcohol.

- I am superintendent of White Shield School at Fort Berthold in North Dakota. Our school serves about 150 students in grades K through 12. When our high school students turn 18, they receive their per capita allotment and they are gone. Often they take one or two students with them. They spend the money and party a little bit. There should be some way that money could be kept or not paid out until students have graduated from high school. In the last seven years we have lost about 20 percent of our students when they turn 18. It may be a local tribal council problem, but it is a real problem and we would like to find a way to stop this from happening. Some ideas we have had include witholding payment until graduation or making only partial payment.

- We have a similar situation. Our high school on the reservation graduates almost every kid who turns 18 after graduation. However, we lose about 50 percent of those who turn 18 before graduation.

The Transition from Middle to High School

- Middle school is a big transition point for our children because a lot of us who live on reservations have Indian schools on the reservation for elementary levels. When students reach middle and high school they must often go off the reservation and attend a much bigger, non-Indian school. This is a big factor in determining how our children succeed.

Teenage Pregnancy

- I am from Ethete, Wyoming, and I am school board chairman for Wyoming Indian schools. I have a couple of subjects I would like to bring up. One is teenage pregnancies in the middle school and high school years. My concern is that there needs to be federal funding to keep these kids in school. Funding could provide tutors to keep the young ladies in school while they are having their babies and afterwards. I think there needs to be federal follow-through to get these students back in school either through home-bound instruction or mainstreaming them back into the regular school.

- On teenage pregnancies: Since it is the decision of a student to put themselves into the position of becoming pregnant, do you think it is solely the responsibility of the federal government to pay for the extra amount of work that needs to be done to keep them in

school, or do you think there should be a plan where it is jointly financed by the individual, either on a pay-back or half-and-half basis?

I have to answer that question from a cultural perspective. As a member of the Northern Arapaho Tribe, when an incident takes place, we don't look upon it as being no good or bad. There is a new life coming into this world, so the first thing we do is accept the pregnancy. The young lady is going to have a child, so the relatives will get together and try to help her. But I also believe that the federal or state governments should help in some way to keep that child off the welfare roles. We want the young lady to learn to successfully rear and provide some kind of a living for that child. We shouldn't shift the responsibility from the mother and father, but we should provide support services and help them gain the necessary parenting skills. This includes technical and vocational skills.

Local Efforts to Curb the High Dropout Rate

We have done some informal studies at my school. I have over 500 students in grades K through 8. There are three other neighboring BIA schools as well as a public school system. Students who have dropped out have indicated to us that their reasons include not being able to identify with what is going on in the classroom, teachers not really explaining what needed to be done, teachers going too fast, and insufficient time to complete class assignments. They felt that they had been put on a schedule with no flexibility. If they needed more time on a test, it wasn't allowed. They also felt defeated because teachers and other school staff members didn't seem to understand them. The easy way out was just to leave school.

This year we have started an alternative classroom at my school for 6th through 8th graders. We are having to re-do the curriculum by making 6th and 7th grade content readable for them. Most of the students are 6th graders; we tell them we are here to help them, but they need to do the work. We tell them frankly that they are in this classroom because they are behind two or more years and we are trying to give them a chance to catch up so they can graduate with their classmates.

We have control up to the point of 8th grade graduation, but then our students feed into the public high school. I know of a superintendent in one of the poorest counties in Georgia who is using our model with mostly black students. If his kids gain two years, he graduates them directly into the 9th or 10th grade. He has found that these kids need a challenge -- once they are given an alternative and challenging approach, they respond. He says that over the past three years he has had almost 100 percent success.

If our schools and the BIA could develop a partnership with the public schools it would help our kids a lot more than just pretending they will go through high school successfully. I know that at least one-third of my 8th graders have been given "social promotions," which means that they did not meet the minimum requirement of achieving a 6.0 grade level.

All of the problems we have talked about as contributing to the high dropout rate--teen pregnancy, poor attendance, lack of credits--are symptoms of the system's failure to serve Indian students. We have to change that system. We do not want to adopt a system like that of the majority culture because it doesn't work for most Indian children. Indian education has to be based on an alternative system. I am the principal of the largest all-Indian high school in Minnesota. In the past four or five years we have been trying to change the system by implementing a variety of innovations. First, we are making sure that we have more Indian adults in the school than white adults. When I first came to the school it was an alien culture for the Indian students, so we began to bring in the Indian community. I think too

many schools try to change the student to fit the school rather than changing the school to fit the student. As Indian educators, we need to do the latter.

- I am from Cuba High School, which is 80 miles north of Albuquerque in New Mexico. Our school serves the Navajo community from about five different chapters. We have a very high absentee rate. Our students start dropping out after they complete their sophomore year. The reasons they drop out include alcohol and drug abuse, teen pregnancy, low academic achievement, and having to ride long distances to the nearest public high school.

  The longest distance any student has to ride on a bus to Cuba High School is about 60 miles one way. We start our classes at 8:50 am, so this means they must get up at 5:00 am and wait for the bus to pick them up at around 6:30 am. Then in the afternoon they repeat the process and arrive home late. This experience is a lot different from that of non-Indian students in urban areas or larger communities.

  This year for the first time we are trying to institute an Extended Day School Program by providing dormitory accommodations for those students who meet our criteria. The criteria include (1) those students who are traveling the farthest distance, (2) those who have four Fs or more, and (3) those who have no running water and no electricity in their homes to do homework by. We feel that this program may help decrease the number of dropouts and the high absentee rate.

- We bus our kids in every morning and back every evening. I'm very proud of some of our Indian students. Those that participate in sports don't get home until 10:00 or 11:00 at night and then they have to do their homework and then head back to school by 6:30 or 7:00 the next morning. It is rigorous, but they are committed and they do it.

III. **Parental and Community Involvement**

- I am Governor Gil Vigil from Tesuque Pueblo in New Mexico. I served as chairman for the public school's Indian education committee. I have students going to boarding school in Santa Fe, and there is also a day school, so I have experience in all three areas. The problem of parental involvement is really hard to address at any level. Even when you have a lot of parents involved, it is likely to be at the bake sale level, or policing their children. We don't have parents involved in the Indian Education Committees or on the school boards where they should be--where we really need their involvement. The only ones you see there are those who you see all of the time, who are really concerned about their kids, and their kids are doing well. The parents who aren't involved are the ones whose kids are having problems.

- We have a public school in the middle of our reservation. We used to have a boarding school on the reservation, but now it is public. We have seen two major differences. I always chuckle about parental involvement because I find it an amusing concept, especially when I compare my parents' involvement in my education with what the school district now calls parent involvement. They really want parents as cake bakers and cops. That is their idea. They send home recipes and say "This is what we want your kid to look like. You feed him and clothe him, you bathe him--make sure he doesn't have any lice--send him to school on time, pick him up, come to back-to-school night and open house, and let us do our song and dance. We will send home the homework and you can sign off. You are the cop." So your kid is on probation at home. This sets up a very negative relationship.

They do not want parents as collaborators or as partners in the campaign for education. They don't want to recognize that we have valid input into the educational system.

- At our high school we have many Hispanics, Apaches, and Anglo students and very few blacks. We are currently in the process of working to build our own high school on the reservation because we feel that many of our students aren't getting the attention they need in the public school. This has been going on for years, but our efforts to leave have made some difference, because if the Apache students pull out, the public school will lose the money and their classification as a school also decreases. So now they are saying "Well, we've always been concerned about Indian students, you know. Well, what can we do?"

  First of all we have pointed out that we have no representation on the school board. They have said that we can have an ad hoc committee and a parent advisory board, but that is no assurance that we can get what we want in the schools. Lack of parental ownership in the education of students at the high school is a problem.

- In Oklahoma we no longer have the number of BIA controlled schools we once had. In my area we still have one that is tribally controlled, but it serves a very small portion of the total Indian population. So the major problems we have are with the public schools. When your tribal members are attending public schools and you want to change the curriculum, you have to go through the school board. For instance, my tribe would like to see Comanche history taught as a credit course in the public school attended by Comanche students. When you have to go through the board to make this happen, it becomes political. Indian people do not consider themselves to be part of this system and do not feel they can in any way have influence. So we need a mechanism to ensure that this can happen.

IV. Native Language and Culture

Problems and Concerns

- It is possible that Indian students are doing well in some public schools, but the question is by whose standards. If it is by the white standard and they are not doing well at the community level, then they may not be getting the cultural background they need. This is the reason people talk about the need for culturally relevant curriculum. We want our young people to grow up with a strong cultural identity so they can excel in any institution whether it is Indian or non-Indian.

- In the public schools you have a lot of non-Indians, and the non-Indian standards, curriculum, and social construction of reality are the norm. The Indian things only get added in; they are afterschool programs, pull-out programs, and afterthoughts.

- The weak point that many schools have is lack of curriculum that is relevant to Indian history and culture. Perhaps the curriculum development effort should come from the state level and be linked to competency testing for Indian students in these areas. This way Indian students could graduate at a level that will allow them to be productive citizens and pursue postsecondary training whether it be college, vocational school, or military service. Many times the state education departments are not supportive of the concept of developing this culturally relevant curriculum.

- I think one of the mistakes we make when we have Native American studies programs in colleges is to assume that those programs are there to teach Indians. They are not; they are

there to teach white people about Indians. Taking the course does not make the person a Kiowa, Hoopa, or a Yurok. It just makes them a white person who has read some things about Indians. It is like basket making. My mother says this to me: "If you know how to make a basket, you know where to go for the materials, it doesn't make you a basket, it makes you a person who is knowledgeable about making baskets."

Ideally I would like to have my children have Hoopa teachers every year for all of their lives so they become well educated and well schooled. Then we would never lose the things that are unique about our culture. Nowadays instead of having a melting pot, we are "honoring everyone's diversity." But we are still looking for this sort of conglomerate American with Indians now contributing something.

The worst example I have seen was where they had listed all of the foods Indians ever contributed--corn, avocados, strawberries, and so forth--but they didn't have acorns. Now, acorns are a staple and very important to my tribe and my kids asked me why acorns weren't on the list. I said, "because they aren't important to white people." The teacher said that "only pigs and deer eat acorns." I have two children so this means that one of them must be pig and one must be a deer, because that is what we do.

Ideally, I'd have Hoopa teachers all of the time, but we also need Hoopa doctors. But instead of us filling in the regular program with Indians, I would like for us to be able to select the people we want and fill in with non-Indians who can help us interpret the society with which we must interact.

State and Local Initiatives

I have a child who attends a public school and another who attends the Santa Fe Indian School. I would like to add to earlier comments about the necessity for a strong curriculum that is based on Indian traditions and culture. I also think the beginning point is to ensure that state departments of education take an active role in pursuing this.

The State of New Mexico approved a policy in August 1986 that set educational standards and required local school districts to identify the educational needs of all Indian students. They also required local districts to include content and concepts from Indian cultures. This requires close coordination among school districts, tribal governments, parents, and the communities.

Taking this another step, more recently the state universities are introducing Navajo language teaching competencies. These steps are necessary if we want to build pride in the Indian kids who are going through our schools. They need to know a lot, not only about their culture, but also about the laws that govern them and their people. Merely asking a child, "What is Public Law 93-874?" is an important step. Most kids don't know the answer, although it strongly impacts their lives. This is now a question on the Santa Fe competency test.

In our public high school, which is off the reservation, we now offer Apache language and are told that it also satisfies the foreign language requirements for the state colleges and universities in Arizona. In all the years that Indian students have been going there, this is the first time we've been able to do this. We also are offering Apache history for the first time. So many of our problems relate back to lack of self-concept and low self-esteem because these kids do not know about themselves or where they come from. Apaches have their own "trail of tears," and when you teach this to students they are very awed by it. So we are going

to be offering both Apache language and history to students at the elementary and junior high levels as well. We are hoping this will change things around.

If you are planning to go to college you must meet the foreign language requirements. Apache to us is not foreign, but I don't mind if they call it a foreign language, as long as the kids can benefit from taking it. They just don't know what else to call it. But this is an issue we need to take to the State Education Office. We say it is prestigious to know French, Spanish, or Russian, but it should be considered just as prestigious to know your own Native language.

V. Native American Teachers

Recognizing the Need for Native American Teachers

- One possible solution is to recruit more Native American teachers for the middle and high school levels in all courses. I just graduated my daughter, who in her whole lifetime of attending public school never had a Native teacher. My son is going through the system now and has had only one Native teacher.

In looking at innovative approaches that will address recruitment of Native teachers we have found that as soon as we get them, they are recruited away to higher paying jobs. The public school systems and the tribal schools are having funding problems. But I really believe that teacher recruitment is a major issue.

I also believe that effective teachers could be of any color if they really understand the culture. Perhaps this can be accomplished through exemplary teacher training programs.

- I direct the Indian teacher education program at Humboldt State University. I am also a member of the Hoopa Tribe's education committee and the parent of two enrolled Hoopa Tribal members.

I think it is critically important to have Native teachers teaching in the classroom. It is not enough to train non-Indian teachers to know about and work with Indian children. We have to have people who not only serve as role models but are able to understand the educational systems that are operating within our tribes, so they can interact with schooling.

At Hoopa we make a distinction between schooling and education. We have people who are educated as Hoopa people and yet are poorly schooled. We also have people who are very well schooled but are not very well educated; it is difficult to mesh the two things together.

When you take non-Indian people and dip them in Indian culture, it does not give them the ability to interact with the parents, the committees, and the tribes. So we need to have Native people as teachers, but my concern is that this is almost impossible to achieve when there is no money to assure that Indian teacher candidates make it through school. We are now facing severe cutbacks and as funding for higher education shrinks, you will not have Indian teachers in the classroom.

- The need for Native American teachers is even more valid and critical in urban areas. We have mixed classrooms in California, and we are now facing a situation where we are running out of white people. By the year 2000 the majority of our classrooms will be non-white. It

then becomes more important for Indian students to have an Indian person as a teacher at least some time in their lives.

Recruiting and Retaining Native American Teachers

- We have been trying to hire Indian educators in my school since I have been there. Right now we are looking for a high school guidance counselor and are offering $5000 above the regular salary as an incentive. In grades K through 6 we have about 80 percent Indian educators, but in grades 7 through 12, out of 15 teachers we have only one Indian educator. We have asked the community college to set up an inservice program for teachers in the fall. We did this last year and it is helping some, but I think the community colleges in Indian country should have done this for us a long time ago.

- I am the superintendent of schools at Sho-Ban School District in Fort Hall, Idaho. In order to have teacher and administrator retention we need to do more than just train our people, because if we do only this, they often leave for other jobs. We need to survey surrounding school districts and establish a pay scale that is based on an average, so we don't get robbed by the local school districts. I lost a terrific English teacher Monday and we are having a hard time replacing her.

  Another issue is retirement. We are BIA funded and do not have the resources to establish a retirement system within the BIA schools. This is a shame, because we are telling our teachers, administrators, and other staff members that we don't want them here for the long haul. "We are not planning for your retirement; this is simply a stopping ground for you."

  I would also like a place where we can advertise for teachers and administrators that are Native American. With the exception of special education, there is no place we can send off to in order to advertise and attract qualified Native Americans.

  We are currently fighting a public certification battle in my area. We have the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges that accredits us, so our teachers need to be certified with an Idaho Teaching Certificate in their subject areas. We have to comply or we lose accreditation and our diplomas will be useless for those kids who want to go on to college. This is important to us because even though we are a small school, three-fourths of our graduates last year went on to postsecondary education.

- Only about 5 percent of our teachers and staff are Native Americans. I worked in Montana one year with an Indian Teachers Training Program, and really, we can't train enough Indian teachers to fill the void. Often when we get Indians trained, if they have any potential at all, they are quickly lapped up by Indian Health Services or a neighboring school district. They are taken out of the classroom to head projects, become supervisors, program directors, and program coordinators. So we are training them for the classroom, but there is such an administrative void that we can't keep them. I agree that our first preference should be to train our own people for our classrooms and reservations, but I don't think we will ever be able to do it fast enough to meet the need. With this in mind, I believe we need to design some special program that will enable non-Indian people to work effectively with our children.

VI. Inadequate Funding and Substandard Facilities

- I blame the system for not meeting the needs of Indian kids. On the one hand they cut back the number of boarding schools in the United States and place students in public schools.

Then they cut back on funding for JOM and other programs that are supposed to meet the unique needs of Indian children. Then they ask us why the kids are dropping out. The reason is because the federal government has not upheld its responsibility. Our problem is that in the many years we have asked for support and the many times we have come lobbying Congress, we continue to suffer the same problems. Many of these problems are related to lack of financial support. A lot of the tribes suffer economically and cannot offer adequate programs without federal support.

- Our BIA school system includes many school buildings that are pathetic. Perhaps one or two new schools are built each year, usually for about $12 million allocated out of Office of Construction Management. Facilities management tells us that our buildings are decaying at the rate of $32 million per year, so we aren't even able to maintain what we have. We have one school that has an asbestos danger sign above it. When the inspector came in, plaster fell off the wall and hit him on the head. I mean, give us a break. We need some new facilities out there at the rate of at least five or ten per year, and we aren't getting them.

  We are charged with trying to bring our Indian students to an equal standing with public schools by the year 2000. We have started out at a lower standard as far as national standards are concerned, and we get less money with which to operate. In Idaho we are 48th or 49th in per pupil expenditure and the public schools have $500 more per pupil than our BIA school. How are we supposed to raise our level of achievement when we are underfunded and our facilities are grossly inadequate?

  This is a federal government system. They should try to make it a shining example to the public schools instead of the debacle we now have. As far as funding is concerned, it is a shame.

- Another issue is transportation. It cost us $4.40 per mile to operate our buses, and this was before the crisis in Iraq and the increase in gasoline prices. Yet we only get $1.17 per mile from the BIA.

VII. Boarding Schools versus Public Schools

- I am confused about the boarding school situation where kids are taken off the reservation and are taught primarily by non-Indians. Parents are not around, and the culture is not necessarily incorporated into the curriculum. Yet they appear to be having a higher success rate than some of the programs that do incorporate these elements that everyone believes are so important.

- When my school board members were growing up they went to boarding schools, as did other in the community, and they told me that they were successful because the teachers have control of the students for 24 hours a day and taught them how to be organized and disciplined.

- In a boarding school, you don't have to deal with the power relationships between non-Indian and Indian children because all of the children are Indian. You may have teachers who are not so competent and who know nothing about the curriculum, but there is no question about who takes priority because all of the students are Indian, and this creates a very positive force.

When you are in public schools the Judeo-Euro-Western culture is the norm and standard. Indian people are either pushed in or pulled out and it is a negative experience. I don't believe in forced segregation, but sometimes we have to segregate in order to save ourselves because the alternative to integration means total loss of who you are.

In a public school situation you have all these white kids--in our town we have the border town kids who get bused in to our school--yet we have nothing in the curriculum that is Indian. We are thinking of adopting a textbook that has been approved for use in California. I went to review it and it says that "The Kwakiutl Indians used to fish for salmon and they believe that if you skin the fish, take the meat out, eat it, and throw the bones back in, it will grow new meat and you will have a new fish." If I were a Kwakiutl, I would die to read this, but I'm not. Then it lists all of the food that the Shumash Indians eat--"clams and crabs." That is it, no other food. This is the kind of material they use.

Boarding schools do not use state-adopted texts. They have their problems, but that isn't one of them. There are negative and positive things about boarding schools. The reason we went with having the public school on my reservation--and my grandfather and father fought for it--was because they didn't want their children taken away from them. They wanted them to come home at night.

I think you have to be very careful when you talk about boarding schools versus public schools because there is a continuum of differences among boarding schools. At one end you have the large residential boarding schools that may serve as many as 56 tribes. Students come to these schools and stay for nine months of the year with a two-week vacation at Christmas. This is very different from those schools where kids live in a boarding situation but go to a public school. Then you also have students who may only board two or three nights a week and go home on the weekends. There is such variety that it is difficult to discuss. Some boarding schools serve a real mono-cultural or mono-tribal situation.

I think that many kids seem to adapt to a boarding school situation as a part of the adolescent developmental process. Young people are naturally looking for a sense of identity. This is why I believe we need to toss out some of the ineffective crumbling parts of the system we adopted from non-Indian schools and make our own definitions of what meaningful education consists of for our children. I don't mean that meaningful education is a piece of paper you come out with. In my tribal history, I've never seen business cards printed by our older folk that say "Ace Warrior" or "Number One Grandmother." We didn't ever have that need for a piece of paper.

I work with adolescents in recovery, and they are looking for the meaning of questions like "Who am I? and How do I find my place in society?" They want to be known. We as human beings yearn to be known and yearn to know other people. So how are we going to provide an educational experience for those young people so that they truly begin to know who they are?

The only thing I can say about boarding school is that when you move someplace else, you leave your family and your reputation at home, and the new people you meet don't know your history. Sometimes these legacies are not very helpful. So when you go to a new setting, you can make a fresh start and be who you want to be. Then, if as staff we allow students an opportunity to get to know us on a personal relationship basis, we can help them succeed.

I am Pima Tonautha (phonetic) from Tuscon, AZ, and I am a product of the Phoenix Indian Boarding School. I have to defend it because at the time I was going to school there were

good teachers and good people to be around. There was no distinction between good staff and bad staff. We all just kind of had a sense of responsibility when we went to a boarding school.

We learned to do our own things and be responsible for ourselves. Vocational courses were offered and a lot of our men and women took them. For the men there was carpentry and masonry, so you could learn a trade, and when you graduated you pursued that type of work. At that time college was stressed, but not as much as it is now. A lot of the people with whom I went to school did very well. In fact, one of my classmates became superintendent of the Indian school after graduation.

I have seen public schools and I have gone to parochial schools--I never really stayed in any one school for any length of time. But learning from experience and living with white people as well as my own people and picking up the language from my grandparents, I feel very proud that I can pick and choose from either side.

I think it is entirely up to individuals to decide who or what they want to be. We can't stand here and say, "Well, you didn't have this or that, so therefore you haven't learned anything." I think everything is based on yourself.

I am from the Pierre Indian Learning Center, which is a boarding school in South Dakota. One of the reasons I feel students do a little better in boarding school is because all of their physical, social, and emotional needs are taken care of in a boarding school. It is a very difficult job to try to meet these needs, and whether or not the students want us to or like the idea that we are trying, you know our number one priority is their needs--needs that probably would not have been addressed at home. Most of the kids that come to boarding school today are from dysfunctional families.

In boarding school we don't have truancy problems. We have a captive audience, kids have to go to school, and they go every day. Drug and substance abuse is not as high, and although we do have our problems, we have better control of them.

I have worked in a public school, a tribal school, and now a boarding school, and I have noticed a difference in the emphasis of teacher inservice and staff attitude. In the public schools the training sessions at the beginning of the year usually consist of outside experts coming in to tell you how to teach better and especially how to make your life easier. So the primary concern is what is best for the teachers. How can we improve our situation, our salaries, our rights? How can we strengthen our teacher organization so we will have more power? Very little concern is focused on commitment to the students. In a boarding school, I noticed that our inservice sessions are focused on how to best serve the students we will have and meet their needs. Very little attention is paid to salary because people know our financial situation and accept the fact that they are working for less money and have no retirement plans.

I guess you could say that boarding school staff is more of a closely knit family. This includes residential case workers, dorm parents, teachers, administrators, and the school board. We are all a family committed to serving the kids that are sent to us.

I am from Flagstaff, AZ, and I would like to talk about the BIA peripheral dormitory programs. I live on the Navajo Reservation in a community they call Dilkon, and when I entered school at the age of six, I went to a BIA boarding school. Then when I entered sixth grade, I went to Winslow Public Schools while staying at the BIA peripheral dormitory. I graduated from there in 1972, and while at this school I experienced many things that I still

value very strongly in my life. I am now 36 years old. I attended Northern Arizona University (NAU) and earned a masters degree in educational administration two years ago. Currently I am working on my doctorate at NAU.

The BIA dormitories that are currently in operation were constructed in the 1950s. There are several of them around the Navajo Reservations in the outlying border town regions. I have gone back to visit some of these locations in my work with education and they are in a very poor state. The facilities are very run down. The furnishings and services are substandard, and the personnel are uneducated and poorly trained for working with these kids.

I believe very strongly that the education my friends, relatives, and I received was the best, and many of us went on to higher education. By living at the BIA dormitory and going to a local public school, we were able to compete with other ethnic groups. We were brought in from the reservation and lived in the dorms Monday through Friday. Most of us went home for the weekends, so we had the best of both worlds. We maintained close ties with our people, our culture, our religion and history, yet we were in a competitive multicultural school Monday through Friday. I feel that this is the type of education students need today to survive.

I therefore support the notion of giving attention to these BIA dormitories because it would be worthwhile in the long run. Although there are now high schools on the Navajo Reservation, there are still students who need to be able to stay in the dormitories to attend the public high schools.

I am principal and superintendent of Chemawa Indian School, which is an off-reservation boarding school in Salem, Oregon. I would like to see the BIA take a good look at the off-reservation boarding school programs and at boarding schools in general. In 1969 when the Kennedy Report was issued, it talked about the atrocities in Indian education. There was an accompanying report entitled "Compendium of Federal Boarding Schools," and that particular report addressed all of the inequities throughout the boarding school system and its failure to really meet the needs of children. Now we have a number of children coming to boarding schools with some very special and unique needs. Yet the BIA and the Office of Indian Education have never really designed a special program for boarding school children. We need a program that will address their academic needs and also their social, emotional, and mental health needs.

We have found that students often use drugs and alcohol to medicate a lot of underlying problems they have. Drugs and alcohol are a very big problem. We are attempting to build a program to address those needs, but we have very, very inadequate funding. I have seen children come into my school heavily under the influence and using and abusing drugs and alcohol. You almost want to wring their necks and throw them out. But we have developed a strong intervention program and I have seen almost miraculous situations with these kids' lives turned around. We have succeeded in getting some bright, good looking, and intelligent kids off drugs and alcohol. Many times when we get them to sober up we find they have been medicating a sexual abuse, child abuse, or physical abuse problem.

I think that if you study and compare Bureau boarding schools to other residential child care facilities you will find that BIA schools are severely underfunded; as a consequence, many kids suffer because their needs in the social, emotional, and mental health areas are not addressed.

I believe that the Bureau has failed and is continuing to fail to provide an Indian or boarding school office that would do nothing but work with boarding schools.

Boarding schools need more counselors, social workers, and mental health workers to work with kids. You can't always get a child to perform or concentrate on academics when he or she is troubled by heavier burdens. Students need to be able to address their emotional needs before they can concentrate on getting an A in geometry or biology.

Another problem which reflects oversight on the BIA's part is the lack of training for dormitory personnel. This is a very important position yet the standards are minimal. You have to be able to read and write, you don't even need to have a high school diploma. We have many fine people that do a good job, but there is a serious lack of training for these staff. We are asking these people to work with kids who have many complex problems; without training, this is aking too much.

- I do not have good data on our dropouts and graduates. When I first came to Chemawa, the administration and student control were so messed up that it has taken us four or five years to get things under control. We had a number of staff who were also abusing alcohol and drugs. We either had to get them into treatment or ask them to leave. So it has taken a while to establish a firm administrative system. We also weren't collecting any data when I first came. We have been doing that more recently and I would be happy to provide some of the studies we have done. I can say that in the last couple of years about 80 percent of our high school seniors have graduated and either gone on to a tribally controlled college, a vocational school, or to the military. A few have gone to college.

Unfortunately, we haven't developed a good tracking system to follow them after they leave Chemawa, although we are talking about starting that process this year. We would like to write to all of the students who have graduated from Chemawa in the past eight years and find out what they are now doing.

VIII. Postsecondary Planning & Career Aspirations

College Versus Vocational Tracks

- Our high school offers three options for a diploma: college preparatory, a standard diploma, and a vocational diploma. The decision of which to pursue ideally belongs to the student; however, sometimes counselors will look at a student's scores and advise students to go for the vocational diploma strictly on the basis of low scores. Based on personal experience, I think that is wrong. I went to a parochial high school and was one of a graduating class of eight. I went to the BIA officer for advice and to see if I could get a grant. He looked at my scores and said, "Well, your scores are very low, and I don't think you can do it. I think you should just go to vocational school because you are very fast with your hands. There is a difference." To this day I remember how he sat across the table and looked at me and told me I was low. It did a lot of damage to me. But I am glad to say that I have worked hard and I just completed my masters degree at an Arizona university and plan to go on for certification in educational administration.

One of the problems that I found in my years in higher education is that we depend too much on test scores. We do not have a way of measuring motivation, incentive, or desire -- all of the things that go into making someone a success. We don't take these things into account.

- I was given similar advice when I was in junior high school. I was told I should be a carpenter because I could work well with my hands.

- Do we need more funds for vocational education in general, or do we need to divide the emphasis we now have in schools so that it also includes more vocational education? For instance, 65 to 70 percent of the jobs that are out there do not require four years of college, yet most high schools are college preparatory. Do you think we should design a curriculum that would prepare more students for those non-college prerequisite jobs?

- I can see both sides of this fence. As a former board chairman for a BIA contract school and current board chairman of a public school, I must say that I would never go back to the BIA if they paid me a million dollars. I think these kinds of decisions should be left up to local control. We know through our own data and needs assessments that vocational training is one of the areas our students need. Our school board and community can decide what types of vocational education should be emphasized.

  I think that the Indian schools will need the dollars to provide strong curriculum. The actual curriculum should be left to local control. No one particular national formula would work for Indian country; the needs vary from one region to another. In our region energy development (oil and gas), agriculture, and light industry are the main things.

- One part of me believes that all Indian students should go to college, but I know that this is not true. There need to be more federal funds made available for vocational technologies.

- Our students need about a year of preparation before they can go into a regular college and make it. If they go directly, about 80 percent of them fail. This is partly due to the alcoholism and poor attendance on the reservation.

  Entrepreneurship Initiative

- I am principal at Crazy Horse High School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. I gave some testimony yesterday about some of the things we are doing with cooperative learning, integrated curriculum, and outcome- based curriculum especially in the 9-12 language arts, social studies areas. Another area we have integrated is the entrepreneurship program we are using. It is based on a curriculum in South Dakota entitled "Rural Schools and Community Development," and it is being implemented both on and off the reservation across the state. This is important because small communities are losing much of their resources when their children leave as adults.

  We are especially concerned about this on the reservation, so we have a hands-on curriculum whereby students participate in developing a business idea, producing a business plan, and implementing it with the intent of generating income. First they survey the community to discover discretionary income and service needs. They look for a way to service the community in an area not presently covered by other businesses. We are training our teachers to work with this program and we are bringing in successful businessmen (especially Indian businessmen) as role models. Then when the students are seniors, if their business is successful, they can sell it to younger students or maintain it themselves.

IX. Problems Sharing Innovative Curriculum

- I would like to talk about the use of the hands in terms of curriculum development for math and science. For the past 11 years I have taught a high school course in New York Public Schools with a strategy I developed that uses string figures as a mathematical learning tool. It is a wonderful course, and I deal with students (not Indian students) who are "damaged" or

cannot do regular math. The strategy I use addresses all the issues of manipulation as a method of learning, and kids really do well with it.

I know that my system of instruction works. I have tried to get people to listen to me, but I find it very difficult to get through the bureaucracy. People tend to listen politely to the idea and then shove it aside. Last fall, for example, I went to Anchorage to give a presentation. First I was invited to Washington, DC, for lunch with the acting director of Elementary and Secondary Education. I had to plead sick at school because as a teacher they wouldn't let me go under any other circumstances. So I flew to Washington and met with this man for lunch. He was very taken with my ideas, but he said he couldn't do anything for me, that I would have to fight my way through the bureaucracy for three or four years and prove my determination, and then someone might listen. He did offer to have Neil Shedd, who was then acting director of Indian Education, come to see my presentation in Anchorage. Shedd was very taken with my approach, but now he is gone. I also approached the National Science Foundation, and they said they liked the idea too, but couldn't help me.

So I am floundering down here. I have an approach, I know it works, and it is cheap. It is pan-Indian, meaning that all Indian cultures have string figures. I have made a video tape and my idea now is to send this out to anyone who is interested (I now have requests from 30 sites). They can watch my hands and then get started. I have made it so you can begin by learning one figure and then by small manipulations you can make literally millions of figures. My students raised their grades 15 to 20 points across the board, because it empowers them to learn.

I am also the chairperson of the Title V parents' committee in New York City and am responsible for outreach to the Indian population. However, we have difficulty finding them because the board of education doesn't help us locate them.

X. A Time for Change

- I'm not sure where these hearings are going, but I hope that this message is sent from Washington, DC, to schools that they must "Stop doing what they are doing!" In other words, if your school has not shown any improvement in the last five years regarding attendance, achievement scores, and graduation rates of Indian students, it is time to stop doing what you are doing right now, and do something different. As Mark Twain once said, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, but don't be a damn fool about it." I think in Indian education there have been a lot of damn fools in the last 50 to 60 years who have tried to do something but really haven't had any effective results.

- In terms of what different things might be done, we have a lot of models of what not to do. Basically we do not want to do what the big, mostly white high school down the road is doing. Indian schools have been trying that approach for 20 or 30 years and it hasn't worked.

  We should look at schools in the U.S. and Canada that currently serve large populations of Indians and have shown increases in graduation rates, attendance, and achievement scores. Find out what they are doing that is working and assemble a composite picture of a model school that can be a shining star to Indian education. We could have a network of Indian schools across the U.S. and Canada that we can say are really making a difference in kids' lives. This is important because right now there are no particular schools we know of that are graduating 100 percent of their students and sending them all on to college.

My main concern as a tribal leader is assuming responsibility for the well-being of my people, whether it is in education, social services, health, or whatever. This Task Force was created to seek information and data and take it back to Washington, DC, because as Indian people we are still testifying and crying about the same problems we have identified 10 or 12 years ago, and nobody is listening.

This year a symposium was held at Brigham Young University where the Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Dr. Brown, quoted statements from President Bush and Secretary Lujan. Their agenda says, "We are committed to making ideas of Native American self-government and self-determination a reality. We will work with Native Americans to promote economic development, improve educational opportunities, and pursue other measures to enhance their quality of life." But how many times have we heard these kinds of words? We have heard them many, many, many times from Washington, but nothing has been done.

My plea here is that you take whatever you gather here back to Washington and let those people that are supposed to make this a reality understand that we are not crying wolf. We need to have things done. If we don't get them done in this generation we are going to fail. I will have failed my people and my responsibility, and you will have failed to do the work you set out to accomplish. It is important that we not fail now, because if we do, it may be too late.

Too often our young people go off in a different direction and lose their identity. I think you hold the destiny of our children in your hands. It is time to hold these people to their promises. They told us we were going to get good educational opportunities, so let's get this done.